

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 7-19, 22, 23, 25 and 26 are pending in the application.

Claims 4, 5, 16-19 and 24 are objected to.

Claims 16-19 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph.

Claims 1-3, 7-9, 25 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Claims 22-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

Claims 10-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Claims 1, 7-9, 11-19, 22, 25 and 26 are amended.

Claims 4, 5, 20, 21 and 24 are cancelled.

Claim 27 is added.

No new matter is added.

Applicants request reconsideration and allowance of the claims in light of the above amendments and following remarks.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 16-19 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement.

Specifically, claims 16, 19 and 26 are rejected because the limitation “chamber pressure of greater than 1 Torr” is not supported in the specification, which specifies chamber pressure ranges of “about 0.1 to about 100 Torr” and “about 0.1 to about 10 Torr.” Applicants hereby amend claims 16, 19 and 26 to change the range “greater than 1 Torr” to “between 1 Torr and about 100 Torr,” which is fully supported by the specification at, for example, page 7, lines 9-10.

In view of the amendments to claims 16, 19 and 26, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the present rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-3, 7-9, 25 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by either U.S. Patent No. 6,082,375 or U.S. Patent No. 6,610,211, both issued to Gealy, et al. (hereinafter collectively referred to as “Gealy”). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants hereby amend claim 1 to include limitations drawn from the subject matter of claim 4. Accordingly, amended claim 1 recites, among other elements, “providing a second gas into the chamber, the second gas being a gas which decomposes the reacting residue, wherein the

second gas includes water (H₂O) vapor.” None of the cited references, including Gealy, teach or suggest at least this element as now recited in claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 and claims 2, 3 and 7-15, which depend from claim 1, are in immediate condition for allowance.

Amended claims 25 and 26 recite elements similar to those found in amended claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 25 and 26 are in immediate condition for allowance for at least the same reasons as presented above with respect to amended claim 1.

Claims 22-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,659,111 issued to Mouri, et al. (hereinafter “Mouri”). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Amended claim 22 recites elements similar to those found in amended claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 22 and claim 23, which depends from claim 22, are in immediate condition for allowance for at least the same reasons as presented above with respect to amended claim 1.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 11-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Gealy.

As a preliminary matter, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 16 was objected to as being allowable if rewritten to overcome the aforementioned rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. Applicants further note that the subject matter specifically recited in claim 16 was not addressed in the present rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Accordingly, Applicants hereby assume that only claims 11-15 were intended to be rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Applicants respectfully submit that the present rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is moot in light of the amendment made to claim 1.

Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being allegedly unpatentable over Gealy in view of Mouri. Applicants respectfully submit that the present rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is moot in light of the amendment made to claim 1.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 16-19 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the aforementioned rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph.

As discussed above, amendments made to claims 16 and 19 overcome the aforementioned rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 16-19 are in immediate condition for allowance.

Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 4 and 24. Amendments made to claims 1, 22, 25 and 26 incorporate the subject matter recited in claims 4 and 24. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 22, 25 and 26, and any claims dependent therefrom, are in immediate condition for allowance.

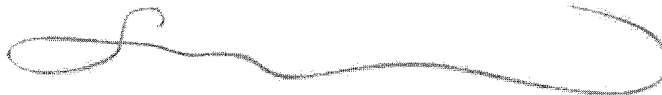
Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter in claim 5. New claim 27, which includes all of the limitations of claims 1 and 5, has been added. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 27 is in immediate condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants request reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-3, 7-19, 22, 23 and 25-27 of the application as amended. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at (503) 222-3613 if it appears that an interview would be helpful in advancing the case.

Respectfully submitted,

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